

The First Muslim Woman Teacher
of Modern India

FATHIMA SHAIK



SYED NASEER AHAMED

English Translation :

BVK Purnanandam

THE FIRST MUSLIM WOMAN TEACHER OF MODERN INDIA

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THE FIRST MUSLIM WOMAN TEACHER OF MODERN INDIA :

FATHIMA SHAIK

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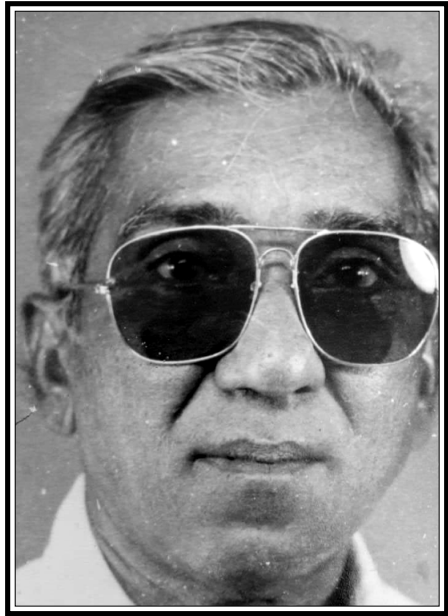
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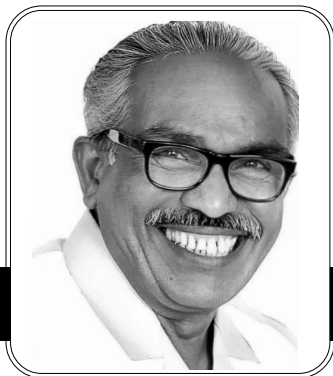
to my ELDER PATERNAL UNCLE
who worked day and night
for socialism which allows
no economic disparities



SHAIK KALESHA

(1928-1998)

SHAIK KALESHA , who is familiar to the people of Kavali area of Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh, was born to Shaik Badebi and Shaik Khader Saheb in Kuditipalem village of Nellore district on 11 July, 1928. He was in Vutukuru and Kancharapalem villages of the district during his childhood. He came into contact with Bejawada Gopalareddy and Puchalapalli Sundarayya at a young age and participated in the Indian Freedom struggle. At the age of 16 he was fascinated at the idea of the socialist society where no economic disparities exist and joined the Communist Party of India (C.P.I.) to work for realising the idea. He married Rokhayabi, the second daughter of Shaik Khatijabi and Shaik Nanne Sahe who was his maternal uncle. In independent India, he participated in various struggles on people's issues as a member of C.P.I. and was jailed several times. Later he inclined towards the revolutionary politics of C.P.I. (M) and was jailed on account of that. After serving the jail sentence, he rejoined C.P.I. (M) and worked untiringly solving the problems of people and won their admiration. Till the last stage of his life he kept on working for the welfare and development of people and extending his helping hand to the needy. Shaik Kalesha, who spent his life in the service of people till his last moment and became popular as 'Communist Kalesha' and won their love and admiration, passed away on 13 July, 1998 in Nellore town. ♦



SYED NASEER AHAMED

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For a long time I have been thinking of writing on FATHIMA SHAIK who is known as the first Muslim woman teacher of modern India. Last year I procured some information related to her and started writing the book but soon I shelved the work as a result of the negative opinions and difficulties I encountered in the process of procuring further information.

Later in August 2020 I again wanted to write and restarted the search for information. I procured several books published on Jyothirao Phule and Savithribai Phule and studied them. To my surprise nowhere in any of the books was made any mention of Fathima Shaik with evidence. This disappointed me a lot.

I decided not to step back even in that discouraging scenario and moved ahead with determination. I made up my mind to bring out a book with whatever information I was able to procure about Fathima Shaik, who is also known as the first Muslim Head Mistress of modern India. In that process I googled about Fathima Shaik and spoke extensively to several writers, history scholars, history researchers and other friends in Maharashtra. In that way I was able to procure information from several Urdu books, books, files and newspaper articles in Marathi which I

got translated into the languages I know - Hindi, Telugu and English. I took help from Internet and social media too. I studied thoroughly all that information and gave shape to this book in four months (October 2020 to January 2021).

Even the history of Phule couple, who led the movement for the universalization of education in the first half of the Nineteenth century, was not recorded adequately till the beginning of twentieth century. Even in that history, three Muslims who played crucial role in the life and movement of Phule couple did not find proper place. The three Muslims were Munshi Gafar Baig, Osman Shaik, and Fathima Shaik. When Jyotirao Phule's father Govindarao Phule bowed to the pressures of orthodox Brahmins and stopped sending Jyotirao to school, it was Munshi Gafar Baig who persuaded Govindarao to send Jyotirao to school again. When Govindarao Phule did not like the reforms undertaken by Phule couple and drove them out of his house, it was again a Muslim, Osman Shaik, who provided shelter to the couple in his house and allowed them to run a school there. Fathima Shaik played a prominent role in the movement which Phule couple had undertaken to run schools for the children, girls in particular, of Shudra and Athishudra communities. The reason why these three Muslims did not find proper place in the history of Phule couple is not known.

After the history of Phule couple started coming into light, mentions of Fathima Shaik started appearing here and there. When campaigns on internet and social media gained momentum, the histories of Munshi Gafar Baig, Osman Shaik and Fathima Shaik started doing rounds through mobile phones. As a result of this, interest to know more about these great souls started growing among people. The increased interest among people prompted Maharashtra historians, writers,

activists and seekers of truth to search for more information and this search resulted in the publication of books, booklets, articles, reviews, analyses and videos which brought details about Fathima Shaik into light along with those of Phule couple.

Then, with the limited information available, I began to work on the present book with the intention of introducing to readers ‘THE FIRST MUSLIM WOMAN TEACHER OF MODERN INDIA : FATHIMA SHAIK’ who played a distinctive role in the social movement led by Jyotirao Phule. Hence I cannot claim that this book is complete and comprehensive. For that matter no history can be complete and comprehensive. For a writer who writes a particular book it may appear to be complete and comprehensive. There are some books (written by me earlier) which I felt to be complete and comprehensive. Contrary to those books, I began this book with incomplete information and ended incomprehensively and hence I humbly declare that this book is far from being complete and comprehensive.

I acknowledge my thanks to Dr. Vinodini Madasu (Yogi Vemana University, Kadapa) who wrote foreword to this book ‘The First Muslim Waman Teacher of Modern India : Fathima Shaik’. I am thankful to the friends from Maharashtra who sent me the basic pictures of Fathima Shaik, the heroine of this book. These pictures served as the basis for painting her picture for this book; to Sri Arasavilli Giridhar (Vijayawada), renowned painter, who painted specially the picture of Fathima Shaik for this book from the basic pictures; to Shaik Abdulla (Vijayawada), another renowned artist, who gave good suggestions for painting the picture; to Sri Nalabothu Jayaraju (Deepthi Graphics, Vinukonda) who, as usual, has been cooperative to me in all ways possible right from the beginning till the end of giving shape to this book;.

My dear friend **B.V.K. Purnanandam**, retired English Lecturer , Guntur, translated for me the Telugu version of this book into English. I thank him from the bottom of my heart for acceding readily to my request and taking up the task on priority in spite of his preoccupations and completing it in time. He has been with me in all my endeavours by translating several books of mine into English.

I pay homage to My maternal uncle Shaik Peer Ahmed (1939-2017), Chairman of Azad House of Publications, who encouraged and supported me in all my endeavours in my career as a writer and to my mother Syed Bibijan (1936-2008) who was always with me blessing and encouraging and read several useful Urdu books for me and explained to me the information from those books.

It would not have been possible for me to complete this book in the absence of encouragement from my life partner Shaik Ramija Banu who has been the driving force behind all my endeavours and has always been helpful to me and the cooperation of my daughter Syed Jasmine Ahamed who has been watching my writing and encouraging me by questioning me whenever she sees my writing gets slowed down.

For writing this book I took help both direct and indirect from several books, journals, individuals and organizations for getting information. Hence I cannot claim this book to be the result of my individual effort. This book has taken this shape as a result of the collective effort of many and I thank all the individuals, organizations, writers and publishers without whose help this book would not have been possible. Printing errors with regard to the dates and years crept into the original Telugu version of this book have been rectified in this English version. I humbly request the readers to bring to my notice their suggestions for further improvement of this book in the next edition. ◆



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FOREWORD

A HIDDEN FRAGMENT OF HISTORY
FATHIMA SHAIK,
ANOTHER PIONEER OF MODERN EDUCATION
FOR GIRLS.

Great deeds of many noble souls went unrecorded in our history as all our history indulged in eulogizing the greatness and fame of a selected few. The history written to satisfy the wishes of the priestly class and ruling class ignored to record the great deeds of common people. It is because of this that the new generation of historians opine that the history we have read is incomplete and incomprehensive.

The history of many noble souls who toiled hard for the society and people was broken into fragments and remained buried under darkness without seeing the light of the day. Some new historians are now holding torches and digging out the forgotten history from under the debris of darkness. They are constructing a new history by piecing together the fragments of information they find. They are introducing to society the lives of many noble souls who sacrificed their lives for the betterment of society.

The name of Jyotirao Phule has been very popular in Telugu society for the last two decades. Soon after that Telugu people came to know the greatness of Savithribai Phule. We can understand the immensity of the influence of dominating castes behind why the history of the great woman who ran schools for Shudra and Athishudra girls 170 years ago has not found place in school text books till now.

Till recent time even the name of Fathima Shaik is not known to readers. Her name came into light only after her name was mentioned here and there by a few scholars. It took so much time to know that Fatima Shaik's name comes next to Savithribai Phule among the two women pioneers who fought for the education of the girl child. Syed Naseer Ahamed took pains to gather information about her from books and historical documents from far off places and gave shape to Fathima Shaik's history. It is known from the sources mentioned by Naseer Ahamed that he consulted many books from Maharashtra and spoke to several historians and writers from Maharashtra to cull information to write this book.

Several details about the life of the First Muslim Woman Teacher of Modern India, Fathima Shaik, have been given in this book. Besides her personal life, we can also see in this book the courage and generosity behind the services she rendered. In those days women education was something unthinkable. That Fathima Shaik received modern education and underwent teacher training along with Savithribai Phule amidst such adverse conditions stand testimony to her commitment for social service.

In those days there was more opposition to women education than the opposition to education for Shudras. The condition was no better for Muslim women with the only exception that they had permission for religious education.

Syed Naseer Ahamed recorded in this book how orthodox Muslim leaders of those days opposed modern education for Muslim women. It is admirable that Fathima Shaik surmounted all the hurdles and learnt Marathi and English along with Urdu and Arabic languages.

Besides information about Fathima Shaik, information about Osman Shaik (Fathima Shaik's brother) and Munshi Gafar Baig who was helpful to Mahathma Jyothirao Phule in his education and movement is also given in this book titled 'The First Muslim Woman Teacher of Modern India : Fathima Shaik'. Mahathma Jyotirao Phule's friend Osman Shaik and his sister Fathima Shaik not only supported his social activities but also converted a part of their house into a school and helped him in promoting education for girls. Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik were the courageous women of India who undertook door to door campaign for educating girls. They were the first teacher activists who faced the worst kind of insult and stood strongly and firmly for girls' education.

Syed Naseer Ahamed revealed many new things in this book citing historical evidences wherever necessary. When we read books of this kind, we understand that the services rendered by many noble souls were kept in darkness by some persons and forces. Only a historian with an alternative ideology and a passion to reveal true history to people can unravel history of this kind. It is appreciable that some historians in Maharashtra are making efforts in this direction. Some historians, writers and activists in Telugu also are trying to rewrite the history of Bahujans.

It is in this context that we have to recognize the book being brought out by Syed Naseer Ahmed. The efforts being made by Naseer Ahamed to find out the hidden fragments of history and to put them together in order and hand it to the

readers is very valuable. We can hope that this information will serve as a guide for future researchers of history.

Syed Naseer Ahamed is a historian familiar to Telugu readers. We know that he has written several books explaining the role of Muslims in the freedom struggle. He researched into the history of many forgotten heroes of freedom struggle and recorded their sacrifices in his books. This is the 20th book in the succession of his books. Syed Naseer Ahamed deserves our complements for revealing to us the details of Fathima Shaik, Osman Shaik and Munshi Gafar Beig. As he has rightly said, this book is far from complete and comprehensive but it is a fact that the valuable information given in this book will be useful in that it will lead to more and more research in future.

In the Appendix of this book are added Hindi, Urdu, Telugu and English translations of a poem of appreciation titled ‘Manav Muhammad’ written by Mahathma Jyotirao Phule about Islam, Prophet Muhammad(s) and Muslim society. The writer mentioned in the book that living together with Muslim community, working together with Muslims and seeing Muslims from close quarters might have provoked Mahathma Jyothirao Phule to write that poem. The works and life of Mahathma Jyotirao Phule reveal the relations the Muslim community of those days had with bahunians.

My hearty congratulations to the attempt of Syed Naseer Ahamed in weaving together the details of Fatima Shaik in the form of a book and handing them to the readers. I hope that people from now on will respectfully add the name of Fathima Shaik beside the name of Savithribai Phule and take both of them to their bosom as the pioneers of modern education for girls. ◆

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When Mahathma Jyotirao Phule (1827-1890) and his wife Savithribai Phule (1831-1897) started a social movement to educate Shudra and Athishudra communities particularly girls who were kept away from education for many centuries in our country, it was a Muslim family that supported the movement in its initial stages and FATHIMA SHAIK was a member of that Muslim family. She was a great activist in the social movement started by Jyotirao Phule. She worked along with Savithribai Phule who undertook to educate girls. Fatima Shaik was a reformer who campaigned door to door the benefits of education. Fathima Shaik was an educationist who stepped forward with the vision of universalizing education for building a prosperous society in India. Fathima Shaik was the first Muslim woman who underwent training in an official Teacher Training Institute to become eligible to teach in the schools of modern India. Thus Fathima Shaik was the first Muslim woman teacher who taught after undergoing proper training in a Teacher Training Institute in the education system of modern India. Fathima Shaik was also the first Muslim Head Mistress who received training in a Teacher Training Institute and who ably managed the schools established by Mahathma Jyotirao Phule.

Fathima Shaik, who volunteered to work along with Mahathma Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule in their mission to educate the girls of dalit and bahun communities 170 years ago in the initial days

of the modern education system of India, was a resident of Pune city. Her family migrated from Uttar Pradesh to Maharashtra and settled in Malegaon of present day Nasik District. Her family members were handloom textile merchants. Subsequently the family shifted its residence to Pune from Malegaon owing to the crisis that arose in handloom textile business and drought conditions.

Fathima Shaik lost her parents at a very young age. She grew up under the guardianship of her brother Osman Shaik. Munshi Gafar Baig of Ganzpet in Pune stood as a father figure for the brother and sister. Thus her family settled in Ganzpet area in Pune city. (Sathyasodhak Fathima (Marathi article) Dr, Shamshuddin Thamboli, Muslim Sathyasodhak Pathrika, Editor : Dr. Shamshuddin Thamboli, July-August 2020, Pune, page.43)

Fathima Shaik, her brother Osman Shaik and polyglot Munshi Gafar Baig extended their whole hearted help and cooperation to the social movement started by Mahathma Jyotirao Phule and his wife Savithribai Phule in Maharashtra with Pune as its centre with the noble aim of educating Shudra and Athishudra communities particularly girls. It is necessary to know the social conditions prevailing at that time in Pune region in order to understand the significance of their help and cooperation.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE TIME

All the social systems in Maharashtra during the time when Phule couple lived were under the control of Brahmanical, caste- feudal forces. As was remarked by Phule in his writings, the powerful caste system was hegemonizing over the oppressed castes and was exploiting their labour taking advantage of their ignorance and religious beliefs. The lives of women of all the castes and classes were in a deplorable condition. The society at that time did not recognize women as individuals and considered them as properties of families and as machines fulfilling physical, sexual and economic needs. (Social Revolutionary

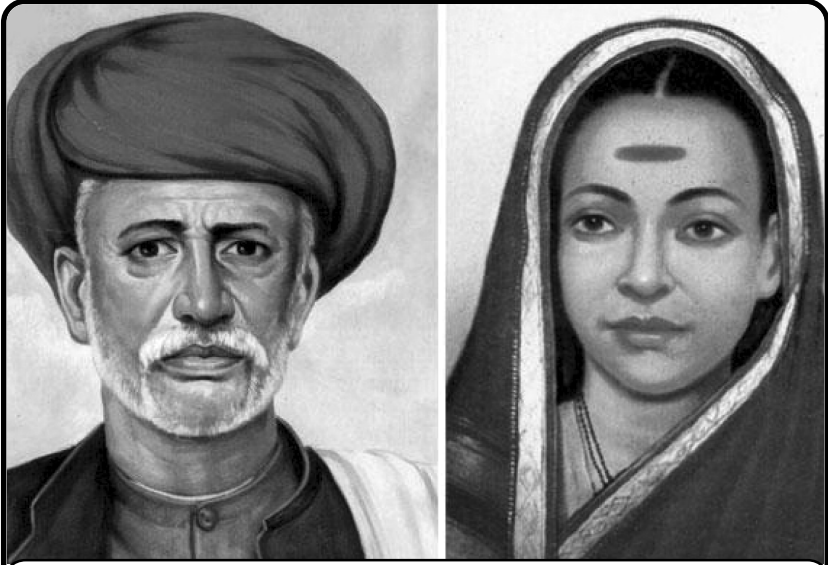
Savithribai, an essay by Cynthia Stephen published in ‘Social Revolutionaries’, an anthology of essays, Hyderabad Book Trust, Hyderabad, 2010, Translation: Kathyayani page:16)

In those days, Shudra and Athishudra castes, besides women, were kept away from education. The superstitions prevailing in those days prevented the boys and girls of these castes from going to schools. People in those days strongly believed that Brahmins alone have the privilege for education and that Shudras and Athishudras have no such right. In those days all the books were in Sanskrit. As Sanskrit was considered as divine language, it was believed that none except Brahmins should learn that language. This was the problem. The well-to-do used to spend time comfortably at home and did not see the necessity of education. Their superstitious traditions and customs never allowed them to think of education. Some people who were devoted to religious traditions even thought that it inferior to send their children to schools. They considered it shameful to send their children to missionary schools. (Mahathma Jyotirao Phule by Dhanunjay Keer, Translation: B.Vijayabharathi, Hyderabad Book Trust, Hyderabad, 2018, page:10)

MAHATHMA JYOTIRAO PHULE

When such disastrous social conditions were prevailing, Mahathma Jyotirao Phule was born to Govindarao Phule and Chinmanabai in Poona on 11 April, 1827. Govindarao who was keen on education joined his seven year old son in a Marathi school. ‘The child was going to school and was studying diligently. When everything was going on well, someone polluted the mind of Govindarao. Consequently Govindarao had second thoughts about the usefulness of his son’s education. (Mahathma Jyotirao Phule by Dhanjay Keer, Translation: B.Vijayabharathi, Hyderabad Book Trust, Hyderabad, 2018, page:10)

That a Brahmin who was working as a clerk in the shop of Govindarao was influential enough to misguide him to discontinue his son’s education, it is understandable how sore it was for Brahmins



MAHATHMA JYOTIRAO PHULE-SAVITHRI BAI PHULE

were to see a Shudra boy going to school. By that time Jyotiba almost completed his Marathi course. He learnt reading, writing and arithmetic. At that stage Govindarao discontinued Jyotiba's education by heeding to the envious words of others. (Mahathma Jyotirao Phule by Dhanjay Keer, Translation: B.Vijayabharathi, Hyderabad Book Trust, Hyderabad,2018, page:10)

GAFAR BAIG'S HELP TO JYOTIRAO

Thus Jyothirao's education came to an abrupt end. After that Govindarao married his son Jyotirao to Savithribai, an nine year old girl, in 1840. Munshi Gafar Baig was Govindarao's neighbour. He was pained to see a good student like Jyotirao working in the flower garden with crowbar and spade after discontinuing his education. Jyotirao lost his mother at a very young age and his paternal aunt Sagunabai was very affectionate towards Jyotirao as if he was her own son. When she came to know about Govindarao's action, she

rushed to Munshi Gafar Baig who was a teacher in Urdu and Persian languages and was a good friend of Govindarao. She requested Munshi Gafar Baig to persuade Govindarao about sending Jyotirao to school again. (Social Revolutionary Savithribai, an anthology of essays – ‘Sagunabai – an inspiration to Phule couple’ an essay by Pamola Sardar, Telugu Translation: Kathyayani, Hyderabad Book Trust. Hyderabad, 2017, page.46)

Munshi Gafar Baig, who also felt that the education of a diligent student like Jyotirao should not come to an abrupt end, met a Christian Priest called Lizit and both of them persuaded Govindarao to send his son to school again. It was because of this persuasion that Jyotirao rejoined a Scottish Missionary School in 1941. By then Jyotirao lost three years of education but he was able to go to school again with the initiative of Munshi Gafar Baig. (Jyotirao Phule, Tarkateertha Lakshmansasthri Joshi, National Book Trust, New Delhi, India, 1992, page 07) Had Munshi Gafar Baig not played an active role in the student life of Jyotirao Phule, India would have missed the history of Mahathma Jyotirao Phule and the great social movement he started leading to several changes and reforms in India.

Mentioning this in his book Syed Shah Ghaziuddin, renowned historian from Solapur, Maharashtra, remarked, ‘The role played by a Muslim teacher in the student life of Jyotiba stood as an important mile stone. The proficiency Jyotiba achieved in English during the course of his education was useful to him to study the books written by western reformers and played a pivotal role in filling his heart with social consciousness. The writers who applauded the role of Munshi Gafar Baig in transforming Jyotiba Phule into Mahathma Jyotiba Phule also discussed the valuable time lost by Jyotiba during his school days because of a dishonest Brahmin. (Mahathma Jyotiba Phule (Hayat Aur Karname), Syed Shah Ghaziuddin, Idara Barae Mutalea Wa Tahqiq Takhe Deccan, Solapur, 2010, Page No. 34).

After studying in Scottish Missionary School, Jyotirao Phule studied in the Government School in Budhwar wada area where he developed intimate relationship with students belonging to various castes and religions. There he used to discuss relative merits and demerits of Islam and Hindu religions. (Jyotirao Phule, Tarkateertha Lakxmanshastri Joshi, National Book trust, New Delhi, India, 1992 page. 07)

After completing his English education in 1847, Jyotirao Phule started taking part in his father's business. The lofty ideas such as Humanity, Freedom and Equality expressed in the books of western and indigenous writers which he read did not allow him to settle in the business. As he studied about the changes happening in the countries of the world and the atmosphere of freedom in the societies there, his mind started thinking in various ways.

A bad incident that happened at that time provoked in him a train of thoughts which decided the future course of action of Jyotirao Phule in the direction of a social movement and gifted Mahathma Jyotirao Phule to India. As a result of the churning of ideas that happened in his mind in the backdrop of that incident, he came to the conclusion that universalization of education was the only way to liberate Shudra and Athishudra castes and women from the hegemony of the Brahmanical social system. Pursuant to that conclusion he decided his future course of action which was to provide education to Shudra and Athishudra castes, particularly women, and began implementing it.

A SCHOOL FOR GIRLS LAUNCHED

Having decided on a concrete plan of action to educate Shudra and Athishudra communities particularly women, Jyotirao got ready to produce teachers. Firstly he educated his wife Savithribai and personally trained her to become a teacher. In the early days of 1848 he launched the first school for the girls of Shudra and Athishudra castes in Bhide Wada , Budhwar Peth, Poona.

HIGHER CASTES BECOME ANGRY

Jyotirao Phule's action angered the higher castes who could not tolerate launching of a school for educating the girls of Shudra and Athishudra castes. ' This is a school for shudras started by a shudra. This is the first of its kind in the country. This caused a commotion in Brahmin circles. They considered it as a revolt and as treason. The Brahmin leaders became furious saying, 'Knowledge and scholarship to Shudras? How sacrilegious it is! Where did they get the courage to do such things against the religion and god? When Shudras have no right to education, how can they have the right to teach? Is he not ashamed to be ready to teach girls? Has anyone seen girls being exposed to other men? All this is happening for the destruction of Hindu religion.' (Mahathma Jyotirao Phule by Dhanjay Keer, Translation: B.Vijayabharathi, Hyderabad Book Trust, Hyderabad,2018, page:21)

The forces who breathed fire on Jyotirao decided to stall him from going ahead in this matter. They threatened him first. Then they tried to dissuade him through the elders of the caste. All their attempts turned futile as Jyotirao started the school and made his wife Savithribai a teacher in the school. Jyotirao who wanted to run the school without any interruption went ahead not caring the adversity.

Unable to stomach the actions of Jyotirao who would not heed to their words, the elders of Brahmanical social system chose another way to create hurdles in his way. The Brahmin leaders who are adept in bringing any situation under their control approached Jyotirao's father Govindarao and started giving him trouble saying, 'Your son has become a blemish on Hindu society. Your daughter-in-law is also bringing bad name to your caste. The two are violating the dharma. This is a sacrilege and a great sin. We order you on behalf of our religion and god. Tell them to stop all these things. Drive them out of your house if they don't listen. (Mahathma Jyotirao Phule by Dhanjay Keer, Translation: B.Vijayabharathi, Hyderabad Book Trust, Hyderabad, 2018, page:21)

Being a man with strong beliefs in caste and religion, Govindarao obeyed the Brahmin leaders. He decided to dissuade his son from these activities and bring him round. There were severe arguments and discussions between the father and the son. Jyotirao made it clear to his father that he would not swerve from the path he had chosen. Expressing dislike towards the actions of his son, Govindarao ordered his son and his daughter-in-law to leave his house.

OSMAN SHAIK’S HELP IN HARD TIME

Consequent upon the social boycott and sanctions imposed on the Jyotirao Phule and his wife had to leave home with nothing except clothes. No one from his family or caste came forward to extend a helping hand or provide a shelter to them as they could not dare to question the sanctions of the Brahmanical social order of the day. But the couple were in the dire need of a shelter as they were driven out suddenly. No one in the neighbourhood of Govindarao could venture to provide shelter to them.

At that hard time came forward Munshi Gafar Baig again to help them. He took the couple to Osman Shaik’s home in Ganzpet, Poona. Osman Shaik was a friend of Jyothirao. Osman Shaik instantly understood the problem his friend was facing and asked the couple to live in his house. Besides being generous, Osman Shaik was a man of broad social outlook with positive attitude towards girl child education and he readily allocated two rooms in his house for the couple. He immediately called his sister Fathima Shaik and asked her to make necessary arrangements. Osman Shaik assured Jyotirao Phule that he would help him in every possible way and acted accordingly. (Urdu Textbook, Second Class, Balabharathi, Maharashtra government publication, Poona, 2013, page.59)

Mentioning this detailedly in his book ‘Kranthi Jyothi Savithribai Phule’, Dr. Tahera Shaik writes, ‘Shaik Osman provided Phule couple with not only shelter but also clothes, utensils and all other essential

things they needed. When Osman Shaik came to know that Jyotiba was going to start a school for dalit adults and that no one was willing to give their house for the purpose, he was pleased to permit Jyotiba to use his house for fulfilling his aim. Thus Osman Shaik's house became the first School for dalit adults.... Osman Shaik's sister Fathima Shaik helped Jyotiba Phule in various ways. ('Kranthijyothi Savithribai Phule, Dr. Tahera Shaik, Adil publications, Poona, 2014, page.55). These details about how Osman Shaik and Fatima Shaik helped Jyotirao Phule in his hard times were confirmed by the renowned writer Somnath Deskar under the caption 'Were useful in hard times' (Bure wakt mein kam aye) (Sant, Mahathma, Vicharak aur Islam (Hindi), a compilation: Somnath Deskar, Sandesh Prakashan, Poona, 2014. Page.43)

But renowned writer and historian Dhanunjay keer in his book Mahathma Jyothirao Phule (Page.25) and noted writer Tarkateertha Lakxmansastri Joshi in his book 'Jyotirao Phule' (English) (page.11) wrote '(Jyotirao Phule) rented a site from a Muslim'. Later in a book 'Social Revolutionary Savithribai (The life and Movement of Savithribai Phule) published in 2017 by Hyderabad Book Trust, in an essay titled 'Social Revolutionaries' Cynthia Stephen wrote, 'A Muslim person gave his building for school as a donation' which means that Osman Shaik did not rent out his building for school but gave it for school free of cost.

That Jyotirao Phule's friend Osman Shaik provided shelter to Phule couple in his house during their hard time is indisputable as it is amply mentioned with details in their writings by the renowned history researcher Syed Shah Ghaziuddin (Solapur, Maharashtra), noted historian and writer of many books, Dinakar Vishnu Kakade (Meeraz, Maharashtra) who wrote a novel titled 'Fathima Shaik', famous journalist Dilip Mandal, Vandana Menon, Gayathri Mithra, Axa Khan, Sidhant Mohan, Suse, Je Tharoo, K. Lalitha. Divya Kandukuri, Deepthi Nagapaul; noted historian and writer Dr. Nasreen Ranjan Syed,

Dr.Tahera Shaik, Dr. Shamshuddin Tamboli , B.B.C.(Telugu) journalist Naseeruddin and others.

When Jyotirao's paternal aunt Sagunabai came to know that Jyotirao was driven out by his father Govindarao, she immediately rushed to meet Munshi Gafar Baig. When she learnt that Osman Shaik provided shelter to Jyotirao, she felt relieved and went to Osman Shaik's house. Since then she remained supportive to her nephew and kept participating in his activities along with his nephew's wife Savithribai and Osman Shaik's sister Fathima Shaik. Till her death in 1854 she kept participating in the activities of Jyotirao Phule and extended her support to his social Movement.(Satyasodhak Fathima Shaik (Marathi essay), Dr.Shamshuddin Tamboli, page.45)

FATHIMA SHAIK WELCOMES PHULE COUPLE CORDIALLY

Fathima Shaik along with her brother Osman Shaik welcomed Phule couple warmly into their house when Jyotirao was in the middle of the whirlpool of complex conditions but with the commitment to eradicate the ideas of slavery rooted firmly in the society by lighting the lamps of knowledge among the people who lost their freedom and were kept away from education because of their being considered as inferior castes. The brother and the sister helped Phule couple in all possible ways besides welcoming and providing shelter.

Even before Phule couple took shelter in their house, Fathima Shaik was aware of the fact that Jyotirao Phule and his wife Savithribai Phule were committed firmly to educating the oppressed people and their girls and were going ahead with a strong determination surmounting the hurdles on their path. Knowing the adverse situation they were facing because of their commitment, she developed a lot of respect and admiration towards the couple. She was eager to see the couple and when she told her brother Osman Shaik about her wish, he promised that they would meet the couple soon.

Fathima Shaik was looking forward to meeting Phule couple. When Munshi Gafar Shaik brought Phule couple one day to their house and sought shelter for them in their house for which her brother instantly agreed, Fatima's happiness knew no bounds. (Sathyasodhak Fatima Shaik (essay) by Dr. Shamshuddin Tamboli, page.44)

With his brother Osman Shaik, a well-to-do person, providing shelter to his friend Jyotirao Phule and his wife Savithribai Phule in their house, Fathima was delighted and welcomed them warmly and treated them cordially. She gave them clothes and utensils and provisions for cooking and helped them in all possible ways.(Kranthijyothi, Savithribai Phule, Dr. Tahera Shaik, page.56) Besides being kind-hearted like her brother Osman Shaik, she had an understanding of the social situation of the times, a broad and positive outlook, and a reformist attitude. That is why the brother and the sister readily accommodated Phule couple in their house.

FATHIMA COMFORTS SAVITHRIBAI

'Savithribai Phule's parental home was a well-to-do family. She had all facilities in her in-law's house also. She had no mother-in-law but her father-in-law treated her with love and affection like a mother. There were no restrictions on her in any matter. But the recent change that came over her father-in-law frightened her to the core. Fatima understood well the condition of Savithribai and used to comfort her. Living under the same roof, they became very close to each other. Savithribai mentioned this in her book like this: 'When we were driven out of our house we were in deep distress, disappointment and fear. No one had the courage to give us shelter. At that hard time Osman Shaik and Fathima shaik stood by us and provided shelter. (Kranthijyothi Savithribai Phule, Dr. Tahera Shaik, Adil Publications, Pune, 2000. Pages.56-57)

FATHIMA LEARNS MARATHI

Being born in an economically sound family, Fathima Shaik learnt Urdu language besides religious education with the encouragement of her brother. As a young woman with the ability to read and write Urdu, she had the intelligence to understand the society. (‘Fathima Shaik aur Chandbibi’, Dr. Nasreen Ranjan Syed, Jaid Publications House, Poona, 2018) It is natural that such a young woman decided to play her role in the realization of the aim of Phule couple who took shelter in her house. Her brother Osman Shaik also supported her decision and encouraged her to move ahead in that direction. She needed to pursue education in Marathi and English in order to teach like Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule. Fathima Shaik started making attempts in that direction under the guidance of Phule couple.

Meanwhile, having settled a little in Osman Shaik’s house, Jyotirao Phule decided to revive their school and started making attempts for that purpose. Delighted at this decision, Osman Shaik encouraged Jyotirao Phule to start the school in his house itself. Jyotirao, who was deeply worried about his attempts to realize his noble aims not receiving any help either from his family or from his caste and facing severe adversity from them, was greatly relieved and felt encouraged by this kind gesture. With that encouragement, Jyotirao Phule took a courageous decision to start a school for girls in Osman Shaik’s house. On 1 January, 1848 Jyotirao Phule started a school for girls with the name INDEGENOUS LIBRARY with the active cooperation of Osman Shaik and Fathima Shaik in the premises of Osman Shaik’s house and created new history.



FATHIMA SHEIK - SAVITHRI BAI PHULE

FATHIMA SHAIK BECOMES THE FIRST STUDENT

No sooner had Jyotirao Phule taken the decision, than Fathima Shaik became the first student of the school to learn Marathi language. Along with Savithribai Phule she learnt Marathi language and other subjects. She gained enough knowledge in Marathi to teach the language to others. As the subjects in that school were different and attractive when compared to other schools, there was a good response from the communities it was meant for. As it was a girls' school, men did not come forward to work in that school. Initially, parents refused to send their children to the school as they believed that learning to read and write was the first step for girls 'to get spoiled'. They feared that they would fall from virtue if they got education. ('Adhunika Bharatha Tholi Mahila Teacher Savithribai Phule', (Telugu) B.M.Leelakumari, Durgam Subbarao, Sathyashodhak Voice, Kurnool, 2020, page.9)

DEARTH OF TEACHERS

In those unfavourable conditions, there was a scarcity of teachers to teach in the girls' school. It became difficult for Savithribai alone to teach in the school. There was need for woman teachers from non-brahmin castes to teach in the Jyotirao Phule's girls' school. As there were no educated women in those castes, it became impossible to find women teachers to teach in the girl's school. Then Fathima Shaik came forward to render voluntary service as a teacher in the school. Jyotirao personally gave teacher training to Fathima Shaik who decided to teach in the girl's school. He conducted the training programme on his own after visiting Teacher Training Institutes run by Missionary schools in Ahmednagar and other areas and observing and understanding the teaching processes followed there.

He established a Teacher Training Institute called Natural School in order to give training to Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik. ('Sant, Mahathma, Vicharak aur Islam'(Hindi) Compilation:Somnath Deshkar, Sandesh Prakashan, Poona,2014, page.44) Jyotirao Phule personally gave the teacher training to Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik. After the completion of the training, Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik started teaching the children coming to the school. It is notable that the duo taught in the same school where they studied.

Gradually, communities that were initially against education developed interest in it as the subjects taught in Jyotirao's school were way different from those taught in Missionary schools or Gurukulams run by 'superior' castes. Consequently there was a gradual increase in the number of girls and boys joining the school and Jyotirao Phule started more schools in various areas.

TRAINING IN THE TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTE OF AHMEDNAGAR

At that time Jyotirao Phule felt that the training he had given to Savithribai and Fatima Shaik was not adequate. 'When he intended to

start a school for girls, Savithribai underwent a training in order to get eligibility to work as a teacher in the school along with a young Muslim woman. (Social Revolutionary Savithribai (Telugu), a compilation of essays, Essay ‘ Best Teacher and Leader’ by Gale Amvet, translated into Telugu by Kathyayani, Hyderabad Book trust, 2017, page 28)

After that Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik underwent ‘Teacher training in Madam Cynthia Ferare Missionary School in Ahmednagar. They both appeared for an entrance examination and passed it in order to get admission in the Teacher training Course in that school. Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik underwent full-fledged training from that Training Institute. (Fatima Shaik aur Chandbib, Dr. Nasreen Ramzan Syed, Jaid Publications House, Pune, 2018, page. 11). In those days it was an adventure for a woman, that too a Muslim woman, to go to Ahmednagar from Poona for education. (Social scientist Savithribai, Sangiseti Srinivas, forum for Concerned BCs, Hyderabad, 2020).

THE FIRST MUSLIM WOMAN TO UNDERGO TEACHER TRAINING: FATHIMA

In that way Savithribai and Fathima Shaik underwent Teacher Training which was compatible with modern education and returned to Poona after acquiring the certificates. Thus they were the first woman teachers with full-fledged teacher training from a Teacher Training Institute recognised by the government. (Urdu Text book for 2nd class, Balabharathi, Maharashtra Government Publication, Pune, 2013, page. 60) After that Savithribai and Fathima Shaik together started teaching in the school started by Jyotirao Phule.

Fathima Shaik , who joined Jyotirao Phule’s school as a student and learnt Marathi and underwent teacher training, started discharging the duties of a teacher in the same school where she was once a student. Fathima Shaik created history by becoming the first Muslim woman to undergo teacher training and acquire a certificate from an authorized Institute recognised by the government. Thus she is acclaimed as the

first Muslim woman teacher of modern India who acquired, besides her traditional religious education, the certificate stipulated by the government and became eligible to teach on par with Savithribai Phule who is renowned as the first woman teacher of modern India.

FATHIMA VOLUNTEERS TO TEACH

Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik volunteered to work as full-time teachers in accordance with the action plan of Jyotirao Phule. Jyotirao Phule, who took a step forward with the aim of educating Shudra and Athishudra and Bahujan communities particularly girls, was facing a severe financial crunch. His financial condition was quite critical. Savithribai stitched quilts for some time to eke out a living. (Bharathatheel paheeli musalman sikshak: Fathima Shaik, Dinakar Vishnu Kakade, Sanghamithra Publications, Meeraz, 2019) He was not in a position to pay salaries to the teachers in the school. So there was a need for selfless and committed teachers who could volunteer their services for teaching the students belonging to weak and backward sections and to take forward Jyotirao Phule's aim unhindered even in such a dire situation. (Kranthijyothi Savithribai Phule, Dr. Tahera Shaik, Adil Publications, Pune, 2000, page. 58) In such a situation Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik came forward to fulfil the educational needs of Shudra, Athishudra communities without expecting any remuneration from the school committee.

FATHIMA BEGINS HER CAREER AS A TEACHER

Fathima Shaik was thus committed to teach adults and students belonging to weak and backward communities in the school started by Jyotirao Phule who was facing difficult social and financial problems. In the company of Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule she gained a good understanding that a society in crisis can usher in reforms and transformation only by knowledge gained through education and started

teaching students belonging to dalit-bahujan communities. She devoted all her time for spreading education with the encouragement from her brother Osman Shaik, under the guidance of Jyotirao Phule and in the company of Savithribai Phule. Fathima Shaik started her career as a teacher with the aim of spreading education after she decided to espouse the cause spearheaded by Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule.

Although the schools started by Jyotirao Phule were mainly intended for the girls of dalit-bahujan communities, poor girls belonging to Brahmin, Christian and Muslim families also were given admission in them. So, Fathima Shaik, Savithribai and Sagunabai made efforts to admit girls belonging to poor Brahmin, Christian and Muslim families in their school.

Fathima Shaik, along with Savithribai and Sagunabai, was deeply committed to light the lamps of education among girls in spite of the traditions, customs that restricted the girl child education. In that way Fathima Shaik became the first Muslim woman to teach in modern India. (Social Scientist Savithribai, Sangiseti Srinivas, Forum for Concerned B.Cs, Hyderabad, 2020)

DOMINANT CASTES CREATE TROUBLES

Society in those days did not encourage women education. People used to think that it was enough for girls to learn whatever they can at home. They sent their boys to schools but girls did not have that opportunity. (Urdu Text Book for 2nd class, Balabharathi, a publication of Maharashtra government, Poona, 2013, page. 59). In such an atmosphere, things like Jyotirao phule starting a school for educating weak and backward sections and girls; and Savithribai and Fathima Shaik coming forward to teach in the school angered the elders of the dominant castes. They hatched plans to cause troubles to Jyotirao Phule and party who were not following the traditions and customs of the caste and religion and disobeying the restrictions and orders issued by

them. Their actions ranged from bad mouthing to physical attacks. ‘Orthodox Brahmins propagated that Jyotirao phule and party spelt doom for all the people by educating the lower castes. Moreover, they brought together all the Brahmins against this.’ (Social Scientist Savithribai, Sangiseti Srinivas)

FATHIMA ENDURES OPPOSITION FROM HER OWN COMMUNITY

Muslim community of those times too had its share of social restrictions on women. In those days Muslim families used to engage private teachers to make their girls learn Arabic and Persian languages at home. ‘Women in Muslim families used to be educated in their homes.’ (Kranthijyothi Savithribai Phule, Dr. Tahera Shaik, Adil Publications, Poona, 2000, page.56) The restrictions on women in Muslim families had been in existence for a long time. Some orthodox Moulvis objected to even boys, besides girls, pursuing modern English education. In such a scenario it was unimaginable to think of girls coming out for education.

It was an adventurous action on the part of Fathima Shaik to go out of her home to teach in a school and to go from door to door to admit boys and girls in the school. For orthodox people it was objectionable behaviour. So Fathima had to face opposition from her own community. Keeping in mind the conditions prevailing in those days, we cannot say how much support she got from Muslim society but there is every reason to assume that she must have faced opposition like Jyotiba couple. (Kya Aap Fathima Shaik Ko Janthe Hein? (Hindi), Conversation by B.B.C. journalist Iqbal Ahmed with Historian, Subhash Gathade, 1 January, 2017)

Founder of Aligarh Muslim University Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Bhopal Begum Sultan Jahan Begum and educationists like Rokhaya Shekawat Hussain too faced the troublesome situations of restrictions,



FATHIMA TEACHING IN A CLASS ROOM

hurdles and sanctions in their lives. Only 9.83% of Muslims and 0.69% of Muslim women were educated as per census 1901. If that was the social opposition against women-education among Muslims during 1900, it is easy to imagine how harder it in 1848.

FOUNDATIONS LAID FOR 'BETI PADAVO' MOVEMENT

Fathima had to face opposition from the leaders of dominant castes who were hell-bent on perpetuating the sanctions of the caste system on one hand and adversity from orthodox Moulanas and Moulvis of her own community on the other hand but she did not step back in the difficult atmosphere of restrictions. With great courage she started meeting people explaining them the necessity of education and asking them to join their boys and girls in the school. She undertook 'educate the girl child' campaign by meeting the families of girls and requesting the parents to provide education for their daughters. She went from

door to door and persuaded parents to send their girls to school. (Urdu Text book for 2nd class, Balabharathi, a publication of the Government of Maharashtra, Poona, 2013, page.60) Hence it may be said that Fathima Shaik laid the foundations for 'Beti padavo' movement way back 170 years ago.

With these actions of hers Fathima Shaik also became the target of the leaders of dominant castes. They began to discuss the actions of Fathima Shaik along with those of Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule. They were enraged at the actions of Fathima Shaik who fearlessly and uninterruptedly went ahead with her activities under the guidance of Jyotirao Phule and in the company of Savithribai and Sagunabai. They started thinking of creating hurdles in the way of Jyotirao and his followers. They conducted meetings and discussions against Savithribai and Fathima Shaik and plotted evil designs to control the duo. Unmindful of what was being plotted against them, the duo went ahead with teaching on one hand and education- campaign on the other hand together with Sagunabai.

POSITIVE RESPONSE FOR FATHIMA'S REQUESTS

Fathima Shaik wanted to provide modern English education to Muslim girls also along with the girls belonging to Athishudra and shudra communities. So she started making efforts in that direction under the guidance of Jyotirao Phule and in the companionship of Savithribai Phule. Jyothirao Phule admitted poor girls belonging to not only Hindu religion but also Muslim and Christian religions in the school started by him. Hence there was an opportunity to join Muslim girls also in Jyotirao's school. Fatima visited the houses of Muslims and started persuading the parents of girls. Though Moulvis and Mullahs in the Muslim community of those days were opposed to women education, she did not heed to their objections and sanctions and went to each house in every street to explain to them the necessity of education for

girls and to request them to send their girls to school. Her efforts bore fruit as people started responding positively. (Sathyasodhak Fathima (Marathi article) Dr, Shamshuddin Thamboli, Muslim Sathyasodhak Pathrika, Editor: Dr.Shamshuddin Thamboli, July-August 2020, Pune, page.46)

As a result of the campaign undertaken by Fathima Shaik, Muslim boys and girls started joining the school launched by Jyotirao Phule. An incident which is said to have happened one day in one of those schools stands testimony to this: one day a person came into the class room where Savithribai was teaching and he alleged that a student named ‘ Mohammed’ had beaten his child and said angrily that he would beat that boy in turn. Savithribai Phule handled that angry person very tactfully and sent him away by persuading him professionally. .(‘Adhunika Bharatha Tholi Mahila Teacher Savithribai Phule’,(Telugu) B.M.Leelakumari, Durgam Subbarao, Sathyashodhak Voice, Kurnool, 2020) This incident makes it clear that Muslim boys and girls also were coming to study in those schools and also reveals the persuading abilities of Savithribai Phule.

FUTILE ATTEMPTS TO CREATE HURDLES

Leaders of higher and dominant castes declared that the attempts being made by Jyotirao Phule to educate Shudra and Athishudra castes were against traditions. Pursuant to that declaration they decided to stall the attempts of Jyotirao and his followers. In accordance with that decision they started making attempts to obstruct Jyotirao and his followers physically.

As a part of their obstructive actions they resorted to stop Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik on their way to school. At the behest of the leaders of the higher castes some unruly elements used to create obstacles in their way. They stood on their way to school and heckled them. They also resorted to some indecent actions. Not

stopping there, they even pelted stones at them. (Urdu Textbook, Second Class, Balabharathi, Maharashtra government publication, Pune, 2013, page.60)

The unruly elements had the audacity to throw mud and night soil on the clothes of Fathima Shaik who was rendering great service to the society by working shoulder to shoulder with Savithribai Phule with the noble aim of spreading education among the forgotten communities. . (Sathyasodhak Fathima, Dr. Shamshuddin Thamboli, page46) ‘Besides throwing cow dung water and mud on her, they used to make obscene comments on her...women also took part in the attacks’. (Social scientist Savithribai, Sangiseti Srinivas, Forum for Concerned B.Cs, Hyderabad, 2020) As Fathima Shaik remained unperturbed in the face of all these atrocious acts and was prepared not to leave Savithribai’s hand in educating the girls of Athishudra and Shudra communities, she had to face atrocities instigated by the leaders of dominant castes many times along with Savithribai Phule.

RELENTLESS DETERMINATION SURMOUNTS ALL HURDLES

The atrocities perpetrated by unruly elements at the behest of the leaders of dominant castes failed to shake the determination of Fathima Shaik and Savithribai Phule but strengthened it further. Savithribai Phule and Fatima Shaik faced the atrocious acts of unruly elements with confidence and courage. As a colleague of Savithribai, Fatima Shaik went through all the troubles with enduring courage and walked along with her. There was no dearth of occasions when leaders of dominant castes questioned unfairly and commented Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik indecently while they were taking children to school after persuading parents. The two woman teachers went on doing their work peacefully unperturbed by the atrocities. Along with Savithribai who gave suitable replies to the unruly elements with confidence and courage when they resorted to physical attacks on them,

Fathima Shaik also bore all the troubles with equanimity and went ahead with determination. (Sathyasodhak Fatima, Dr. Shamshuddin Thamboli, page46)

FATHIMA SHAIK WALKS ALONG WITH SAVITHRI BAI PHULE

Undaunted by the hurdles created by the dominant castes Jyotirao Phule started five more schools for girls and a school for adults in Pune by 1849. Initially Savithribai was the only teacher in the school but with the arrival of Fathima Shaik the burden on her got lightened. After that Jyotirao established several schools outside Pune also and had them organised by local committees.

Starting with girls school Jyotirao gradually established adult school and teacher training school. Then he started an ‘ashram’ for women widowed at a young age because of child marriages. When women widowed at a young age became pregnant for any reason, Jyotirao and Savithribai attended such women during child birth and joined such children in ‘Balahathya Prathibandhaka Griha’ which he started on 12 July, 1953 to protect children born to such women. In order to carry out this activity, Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik underwent training in midwifery. In 1954 Jyotirao started a night school for labourers and farmers and Fathima Shaik extended her direct or indirect cooperation to all such activities under taken by Jyotirao on humanitarian grounds. (Sathyasodhak Fathima (Marathi article) Dr. Shamshuddin Thamboli, July-August 2020, Pune, page47) Fatima Shaik participated in all the institutions and social service programmes undertaken by Phule couple as a teacher, as a social worker and as a reformer without expecting any rewards.

FATHIMA SHAIK AS THE HEAD MISTRESS

In 1856 Savithribai fell seriously ill. On account of illness she had to go to her parental home in Naigaon in Khandala taluk, Satara district, Maharashtra. On that occasion additional duties of teaching in Jyotirao’s

schools, organizing various programmes and supervising fell on Fathima's shoulders. As Savithribai's stay at her parental home had to be longer than expected, Jyotirao Phule appointed Fathima as the Headmistress and entrusted her additional responsibilities of supervision and administration of the school in Poona besides teaching. Fathima Shaik ably discharged the responsibilities and was praised by Savithribai. Fathima Shaik created history by being the first Muslim woman to become not only a trained teacher of modern India and the first Muslim lady teacher of modern India, but also the first Muslim Headmistress of modern India. (Sathyasodhak Fatima (Marathi article) Dr. Shamshuddin Thamboli, July-August 2020, Pune, page. 47)

SAVITHRIBAI'S LETTER BREATHES LIFE INTO THE HISTORY OF FATHIMA.

In 1856 Savithribai had to be in her parental home for many days, as she did not recover from her illness. Even while suffering from illness, her mind was always occupied with the thoughts of their schools. She had immense confidence in her colleague Fatima Shaik's abilities and she was peaceful without any anxiety.

But there was a worry in her mind that her colleague Fathima Shaik who had been supporting them in all their programmes was presently overburdened because of her illness. That is why she expressed the same. As a woman who had seen Fathima Shaik's nature, style of functioning, and administrative ability from close quarters, she was confident that Fathima Shaik would discharge her duties efficiently without grumbling and Savithribai expressed this opinion very clearly in a letter.

THE LETTER DATED 10 OCTOBER, 1856

When she was in her parental house Savithribai wrote a letter on 10 October, 1856 to her husband Jyotirao who was in Poona. In that lengthy letter she discussed the social conditions of her native village Naigoan and the discussions she had with her brother. In the end she

mentioned about her health, ‘My health is completely restored. During all these days of illness my brother looked after me very caringly. The care he had taken and the service he had rendered made me feel the immensity of his love for me.(Samajika ViplavaKarini Savithribai (Telugu), Vyasasamputi, Vyasam:Jyotibaku Savithri Rasina Premalekahalu, Vyasakartha: Sunil Sardar, Telugu Anuvadam: Kathyayini, Hyderabad Book Trust,2017, page.49)

Then while comforting her husband Jyotirao Phule not to worry about her, she made a mention of the administration of their schools. By that time in 1856 Jyothirao had established five schools in Pune and 15 schools outside Pune. Savithribai and Fathima Shaik had been supervising the teaching and administration of these schools under the guidance of Jyotirao Phule. Now that Savithribai had to be away from Pune for many days due to her illness, all the burden of administration and teaching in all those schools fell on Fatima Shaik.

Savithribai understood how burdensome it was for Fathima, in her absence, to do alone the work which they both together did. Thinking of the increased burden of teaching and school administration on Fathima Shaik and the critical situation of herself not being able to go to Pune she wrote in that letter like this: ‘I will come to Pune as soon as I have completely recovered. Please don’t be worried about me. This must be causing a lot of trouble to Fatima. But I am sure she will understand and won’t grumble.’ Thus Savithribai expressed her confidence in Fathima that she would deliver on her responsibilities well. She comforted her husband by saying that Fathima would understand all the things well and take good care of the administration of the schools.(Samajika ViplavaKarini Savithribai (Telugu), Vyasasamputi, Vyasam: Jyotibaku Savithri Rasina Premalekahalu, Vyasakartha: Sunil Sardar, Telugu Anuvadam: Kathyayini, Hyderabad Book Trust,2017, page.49)



**FATHIMA AND SAVITHRI BAI APPEALING THE PEOPLE
TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL.**

In the first volume of the famous book *WOMEN WRITING IN INDIA: 600 BC TO THE PRESENT*, published under their joint editorship, renowned writers Susie Tharu & K. Lalitha quoted that part of Savithribai's letter at page 213, 'I will come to Pune as soon as I have completely recovered. Please don't be worried about me. This must be causing a lot of trouble to Fathima. But I am sure she will understand and won't grumble.' From this it becomes very clear that Fathima Shaik discharged the duties of teaching and supervision in the schools responsibly and efficiently in the absence of Savithribai

SAVITHRIBAI PRAISES FATHIMA

Savithribai had immense confidence in Fathima Shaik's abilities with regard to teaching and school administration in the schools started by Jyotirao Phule. She knew pretty well that she could deliver on the responsibilities efficiently. So it is not unnatural that she wrote, '...This must be causing a lot of trouble to Fathima. But I am sure she will

understand and won't grumble...' to her husband Jyotirao in order to comfort him.

These sentences (written by Savithribai, the first woman teacher of modern India, about Fathima Shaik, her comrade in the movement for the spread of education among Shudra and Athishudra castes) gain a lot of significance, importance and historical value in recording the history of Fathima Shaik parallel to that of Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule and are helpful, though belatedly, for bringing to light the history of the services rendered by Fathima.

These sentences stand as the main evidence to reveal authoritatively to the world the history of the educational and social services rendered by Fathima Shaik who had been with Phule couple in all their activities, organisations and institutions. If these two valuable sentences had not been there in the pages of history, if they had not been available, history of Fathima Shaik would not have probably seen the light of the day.

Similarly, neither the history of Munshi Gafar Baig, who paved the way for continuation of Jyotirao's education by persuading Jyotirao Phule's father Govindarao when he discontinued Jyotirao's education, nor the history of Osman Shaik, who provided shelter to Phule couple when they were driven out of their house by Jyotirao's father Govindarao Phule, would have been revealed to the world, if these two sentences had not been available.

DELAYED POPULARITY OF THE HISTORY OF PHULE COUPLE

Jyotirao Phule and his wife Savithribai Phule wrote profusely. They composed poetry, wrote books and published them. They wrote several letters to the British officers, organizations and institutions of those days and submitted several reports to them. They spoke in several conferences and meetings. That is why all their writings and utterances are all safe in files and the history of Phule couple is also securely recorded in those files. Though people of Pune and surrounding areas

are aware of the activities of Phule couple to some extent, those activities came belatedly under the purview of researchers and historians.

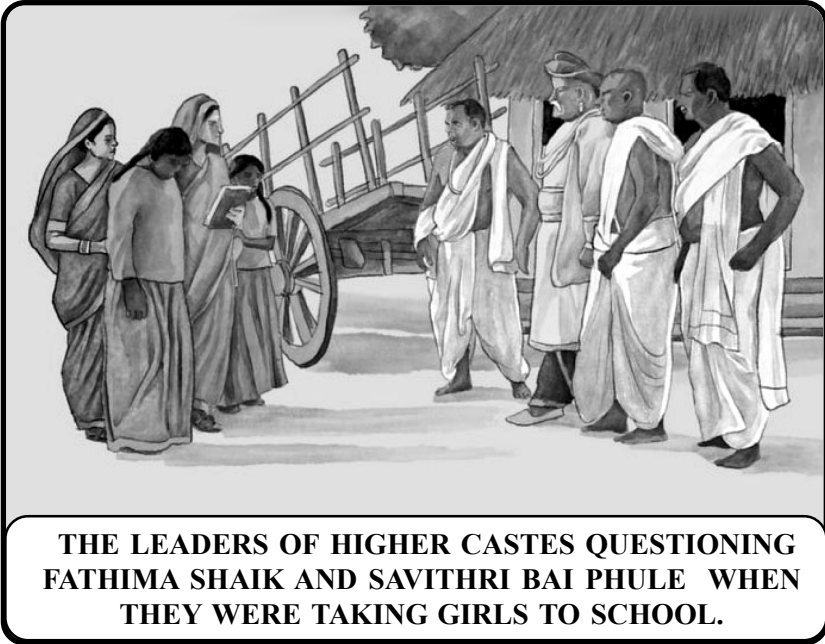
Though the history of Mahathma Jyotirao Phule couple was recorded in governmental and non-governmental files and history books of the history of their peerless services started becoming popular in Maharashtra only after 1926. After 1939 their history became more popular through the books of renowned historians and researchers such as Poolwanthibai Jodage, Dr. M.G. Mali, Dr. K.P.Deshpande and Prof. Hari Narke.

People of states other than Maharashtra came to know the History of Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule only after 1980 i.e., 60 years after it became popular in Maharashtra. When books on Phule couple were translated from Marathi into English several Telugu writers started translating them into Telugu. Dr Katti Padma Rao (2008), Durgam Ravindar, Durgam Subbarao-B Leela Kumari (2020) and others published book on Phule couple in Telugu. (Social scientist Savithribai, Sangiseti Srinivas, Forum for Concerned B.Cs, Hyderabad, 2020)

In that way translations and books by several writers on the histories of Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule, on their activities and on their works were released. Innumerable articles and booklets were also released. Original books were also published. In this way it took more than 150 years for the history of Phule couple and their movement to become familiar to Telugu people.

FATHIMA ON PAR WITH SAVITHRIBAI

As a result of the awareness among dalit-bahujan communities caused by the literature thus published, social historians began to write on the back-drop of the movement of Jyotirao Phule along with the history of the movement led by Phule couple. It was only after that the history of Fathima Shaik started to be discussed on academic platforms along with the history Phule couple. After dalit-bahujan activists have started taking Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule as their icons while



THE LEADERS OF HIGHER CASTES QUESTIONING FATHIMA SHAIK AND SAVITHRI BAI PHULE WHEN THEY WERE TAKING GIRLS TO SCHOOL.

organizing democratic struggles on the issues of their communities, they started giving space to Fatima Shaik on par with Phule couple. In all their programmes all over India these activists started exhibiting the picture of Fathima Shaik beside the pictures of Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule. As the speakers in such programmes also started mentioning the names of Fathima Shaik and others along with those of Phule couple, Fathima Shaik's name became more popular.

Gradually it has become a convention for activists, historians, writers and artists of dalit-bahujan communities to start all their agitational programmes by remembering their icons- Mahathma Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule- and reflecting on the history of these great souls. Mentioning the history of Fathima Shaik with respect and admiration has become a part of these occasions. Exhibiting Fathima Shaik's picture beside the pictures of Phule couple with great respect helped Fatima Shaik's history become known to people gradually. Besides mentioning

Fathima Shaik's name every time they mentioned Savithribai Phule's programmes, speakers, activists, researchers, historians, writers, poets and artists began writing about her. With this Fathima Shaik's name which has hitherto been hidden in the pages of history books gradually started coming out to be known to the world. As it has become customary in all the encampments of dalit-bahujan agitations to exhibit the picture of Fathima Shaik beside the picture of Savithribai, Fathima Shaik's history started spreading into general public from the confines of the dalit-bahujan communities and became more popular.

Some new political parties that have recently come into existence made mentions of the Phule couple repeatedly. With the aim of garnering the votes of bahujan, dalit and Muslim communities leaders of all these parties started praising the services rendered by Fathima Shaik while remembering the sacrifices made by Phule couple. They inevitably exhibited the picture of Fathima Shaik beside the pictures of Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule. In the meetings and conferences, in addition to remembering Fathima Shaik, they went a step ahead and often mentioned the help extended by Osman Shaik (Fathima Shaik's brother) and Munshi Gafar Baig (teacher) to Jyotirao Phule in his childhood and when he started schools. With this the history of Fathima Shaik and others started becoming more popular.

PAUCITY OF FILES ON FATHIMA'S HISTORY

As Fathima Shaik's history has been forgotten for about 150 years and as files and books of those days were not adequately available, information obtained through oral communication is the only basis for writers and researchers. Mentions of Fathima Shaik, Osman Shaik and Munshi Gafar Baig have not yet been found either in the books and files of Phule couple or those of their friends and contemporaries after the mentions made about Fatima Shaik in the letters written by Savithribai Phule to her husband.

Till today files or writings or reports written by Fathima Shaik herself have not yet been unravelled. Hence Fatima Shaik's complete history with evidences has not yet been available to historians and history researchers. After a little of her history had been available, history researchers, historians, writers in Maharashtra are trying hard to extract more information related to her history.

Maharashtra government also is doing its bit by funding projects undertaken by Maratha Intellectuals to delve deeper into the history of Fatima Shaik. Historians, history researchers, writers and poets belonging to Muslim community along with those from dalit-bahujan communities are making a beeline to Pune and are making efforts to find out new facts about Fathima Shaik and to reveal the authoritative information to the world.

THE PHOTO THAT REVEALED HISTORY

While the sentences written by Savithribai Phule about her colleague Fathima Shaik were immensely useful in revealing the history of Fathima Shaik, the photo depicting Sagunabai, Savithribai and Fathima Shaik together with some boys and girls becoming available is further useful in constructing her history. This photo revealed to the world the costumes as well as the features of Savithribai and Fathima Shaik. This photo is the basis for the colour photos of Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik popularly available not only in India but also all over the world. It is on the basis of this photo that artists are painting pictures of Savithribai and Fathima Shaik in various ways and bringing them available to people.

This photograph reveals not only the close friendship between Savithribai and Fathima Shaik but also their equal status. If we notice Savithribai and Fathima Shaik being seated in chairs side by side in the photo, it becomes clear that they were teachers enjoying equal status. In this way this historically important photograph reveals to the world not only their features and nature but also their close relationship and equal status.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE PHOTOGRAPH

There is something special behind the way how the photograph, which has acquired historical importance, came to be available. That special thing confirms the authenticity of the photograph. Mr. Naseeruddin, a journalist working in the Hindi department of BBC News, acknowledged how he got the photograph while narrating the story of Fatima Shaik in Hindi under the caption, ‘Fatima Shaik, Savithribai ke saath vanchithon ke sikshith karnewali mahila’

The BBC journalist Mr. Naseeruddin in his article published in Hindi on 13 September, 2020 vide the web link <https://www.bbc.com/hindi/india-54069860> acknowledged the source of the historically important photograph.

“There is a picture in ‘The Complete Works of Savithribai Phule’. In that picture beside Savithribai is seated another woman. That woman was none other than Fathima Shaik. The Photograph is the biggest proof to the fact that umen must be Fathima Shaik and Savitri Bai. But where is the proof to say that this picture is authentic?. Dr. M.G. Mali revealed a great piece of information in the book “The Complete Works of Savithribai Phule” which was published under his editorship. Savithribai’s picture was printed in ‘Majur’ paper published from Pune many years ago somewhere between 1924 and 1930. R.N. Lad was the editor of the paper. Dr. M.G. Mali got this picture from D.S. Jogde. D.S. Jogde also worked as the editor of ‘Majur’ for some time. Dr. Mali got most of the information related to this picture from Jogde. According to M.G. Mali, ‘A rare photograph was printed in the famous book written by a missionary named Lokande. That photograph and the picture printed in ‘Majur’ look identical. Savithribai’s picture was painted on the basis of the photograph. A book written by Proffessor Leela Pande titled ‘Maharashtra Karthavyashalini’ was published in



**FATHIMA SHAIK GOING TO SCHOOL ALONG WITH
SAVITHRIBAI PHULE**

1966. In that book a drawing was printed. There was no difference between the drawing and the photo. I observed several other pictures along with that picture. Eknath Palkar of Pune too had some negatives. Jogde got this negative from him. From that negative the pictures of Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik became available. This is a rare picture developed from the hundred year old negative. I got this picture from that negative.’ Hadn’t this picture been available, we wouldn’t have got even Savithribai’s shadow let alone her picture. The picture of Savithribai we are seeing is this. It is this picture which declared that Fathima Shaik is also a historical character like Savithribai, gave life to the history of Fathima Shaik, brought and stood her in front of us.”

Along with this explanation, in an article under the caption ‘ Ancient house in Poona and Women who created history’ BBC journalist Naseeruddin brought before the readers vividly some more physical things that bear witness to the historical role played by Fathima Shaik

of that day. He wrote that there is a mention of Savithribai and Fathima Shaik in addition to the picture of both the women on the name board in the front of the house in which Jyotirao Phule started the first girl's school in those days.

Thus Journalist Naseeruddin helped construct the history by giving vivid details about how the hundred year old picture, which has been instrumental in revealing to the world the great services rendered by the historical persons of those days, became available and by handing to the present generation the rare pictures of Savithribai Phule and Fathima Shaik. Naseeruddin goes on to note the fact that the people of Pune are protecting the first school started by Jyotirao Phule and remember with respect Savithribai and Fathima Shaik, the first teachers who taught the boys and girls in that school. History lovers, history researchers and historians are delighted at this.

WHAT HAPPENED TO FATHIMA AFTER 1856?

What happened to Fathima Shaik after it was written about her in Savithribai's letter in 1856 is not known. No files or letters bearing mentions about her have yet been unravelled. It looks peculiar that no mentions about a great woman like Fathima Shaik who, besides being a member of a well-to-do family, was the first Muslim woman in modern India to have undergone official teacher training in modern English education, the first Muslim woman teacher in modern India and the first Muslim Head Mistress in modern India. She was a social worker who, besides teaching, rendered services as a volunteer in several social service organisations launched by Savithribai Phule and Jyotiba Phule. It is even more peculiar that the place of Fatima Shaik in the histories of those organisations is not revealed yet.

WAS FATHIMA SHAIK MARRIED?

What happened to Fathima Shaik who is considered to be a woman of about the same age as Savithribai Phule after 1856? As an answer to this question Dr. Shamshuddin Tamboli, a historian from Pune declared that she got married and that Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule performed that wedding. In ‘Muslim Sathyashodhak’, a paper published under his editorship, he narrated this in a detailed way. He narrated that Phule couple themselves performed that dowryless ideal wedding

Dr. Shamshuddin quoted Mr. S.M. Mushreef, former Director General of Police, who revealed this in his foreword to the book, ‘Bharathatheel Pahili Musalman Shikshak: Fathima Shaik by the renowned writer of Meeraz, Maharashtra, Dinakar Vishnu Kakade (Sanghamithra Publications, Meeraz, 2019), (Sathyashodhak Fatima Shaik (Marathi article), Dr. Shamshudddin Tamboli, page,47)

Speaking to this writer on 17-9-2020, Dinakar Vishnu Kakade acknowledged that there was a mention about Fathima Shaik’s wedding in his book. Dinakar Vishnu Kakade and Dr. Shamshuddin revealed that Fathima Shaik had moved to her in-law’s place after the wedding and on account of this no details of her life have been available. In the absence of any authoritative evidence to this piece of information, its authenticity is yet to be confirmed.

PLENTY OF ORAL INFORMATION

Though there is nothing available in the form of official files, there is plenty of information in the domain of oral communication. Regardless of the authenticity of the oral information, several writers, historians and history researchers are writing novels, poetry, articles and books describing the features and attitude of Fathima Shaik. People outside Maharashtra come to know at least something about Fathima Shaik

because of these books. Maharashtra Government keeps her history alive by mentioning about her in their official files and by incorporating lessons about her in the school text books.

BIRTH AND DEATH OF FATHIMA SHAIK

On the basis of this oral information people of not only Pune but also Maharashtra believe that Fathima Shaik was born on 21 September, 1832 and that she passed away on 9 January, 1900. It is also said that she was born on 9 January 1831. Several voluntary organizations and people are celebrating her birth and death anniversaries on the dates they deem it correct. For the past several years several Institutions, social organizations, dalit-bahujan organizations and political parties have been celebrating Fathima Shaik's birth and death anniversaries without any hesitation about the dates and every year it is widely communicated in social media. In the Telugu states, 9 January, 1831 is believed to be her date of birth. It is notable that there is no authentic evidence for these dates in the form of either files or books.

HISTORICAL INJUSTICE TO FATHIMA SHAIK

It may be said that historical injustice was done to Fathima Shaik who went ahead with the great aim of lighting the lamps of knowledge among the girls belonging to all communities including dalit-bahujan communities withstanding the opposition from the religious orthodoxy and adverse social conditions and restrictions prevailing in the society 170 years ago and extended her cooperation in full measure to Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule. Fatima Shaik who took an enthusiastic bold step to educate Shudra and Athishudra communities and their boys and girls also tried hard to educate the girls of her own community. Her attempts in doing so also gave good results.

Intellectuals who evolved from Athishudra and shudra communities in those oppressive conditions tried to unravel and record every detail in the history of Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule. Still such attempts are going on. It is not understood why intellectuals, historians and history researchers belonging the community of Fatima Shaik did not make such attempts. It is not known whether such attempts, if at all made, did not bear fruit.

There are allegations that some people are obstructing such attempts to reveal the history of Fathima Shaik. Keeping the allegations apart, the Muslim community need to introspect as to what it has done in this regard. It is sad that efforts were not made to record the history of Fathima Shaik, who set for herself a great aim and got modern education, acquired the eligibility to teach and came forward to volunteer her services to teach as the first Muslim woman teacher and the first Muslim Headmistress in the arena of modern education in India, at least by her own community.

MY ATTEMPTS TOO WERE DISCOURAGED

When I came to know a little bit about Fathima Shaik during my regular study in 2019, I thought of writing about her. I started giving shape to that idea. Then I contacted a friend of mine in Maharashtra, who was a writer and researcher of history, for information. He discouraged me saying it was wrong to say that there were no teachers from Muslim community before Fathima Shaik and bombarded me with questions as to how it can be claimed that Fathima Shaik was the first Muslim woman teacher in modern India. Then I did not have any authoritative information about Fathima Shaik to answer his questions and I gave up my plan of writing a book on the history of Fathima Shaik.

Again this year I wanted to write about Fathima Shaik and contacted some historians in Solapur, Maharashtra and sought information about



सावित्रीमाई ज्योतिबा फुले आणि फातिमा शेख
यांच्या शाळेतील २ विद्यार्थीसह. (१०० वर्षांपुढे
नेगेटीव वरून तयार केलेले दुर्मिळ छायाचित्र)

160 year old rare photograph of Saithribai Phule, Fathima Shaik and Sagunabai.
Students of the school can also be seen in the picture.

Fathima Shaik from them. Again I encountered the same questions as I faced earlier. This time I was armed with some authoritative information about Fatima Shaik and when I made a convincing case with that information that she was the first Muslim woman to have undergone official teacher training in the field of modern education in India and mentioned other specialities of Fathima Shaik, they kept quiet and expressed their dissatisfaction saying ‘As you wish’. In view of this it appears that historical injustice was done to Fathima Shaik not only in Pune but also in the whole Maharashtra state.

A SURPRISING THING

Mahathma Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule did write several books, numerous letters, submitted a number of representations to government officials, sent many reports and built up several files. They organized many meetings and conferences and participated in meetings and conferences organized by other individuals and organisations who recorded their speeches and opinions expressed in such meetings in writing. In their writings they made a mention of the activities of their co-activists and services rendered by them. It is surprising to notice that there is not an iota of information in any of these mentions about Osman Shaik who had been greatly helpful to Phule couple in the initial stages of their movement. It is even more surprising that not even once is found in such mentions the name of Fathima Shaik who supervised teaching and administration of Jyotirao Phule’s schools and acted as the Head Mistress of a school in place of Savithribai Phule when the latter was in her parental home due to ill-health.

Did Fathima Shaik, who was a teacher, social worker and social reformer, write anything? If she had written anything, what happened to all her writings? Where are they now? If she did not write anything,

the question arises as to why she did not write anything. Did she not write at least letters to her friends and relatives in spite of being an educated woman? Several such doubts and questions arise about the non-availability of any material written by Fatima.

EXTENSIVE SEARCHES AND RESEARCHES

Questions apart, historians and history researchers of Maharashtra say that they have not come across any information about any material written by Fathima Shaik. As a result, it is generally felt that she did not write anything. But several historians and history researchers, besides Maharashtra government, are now focussing on Fathima Shaik's history after seeing how the histories of Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule are spreading extensively into people after they came to light for the first time in 1926. Extensive research is now going on to undo the historical injustice done to Fathima Shaik. Efforts are on to extract information about Fathima Shaik from all possible sources. That the searches and researches undertaken by the government and individuals are going on extensively is a happy and welcome development. ♦

APPENDIX

When I undertook to write ‘The First Muslim Woman Teacher : Fathima Shaik’ and was in search of information, an interesting new thing came to my notice. I include that interesting information as an appendix in this book with the intention of sharing it with the readers.

Mahathma Jyotirao Phule is said to have written two ‘pawadas’ as a part of the literature he had created during his life time. A ‘pawada’ may be interpreted as a poem of appreciation. Mahathma Jyotirao Phule wrote one such poem on Chatrapathi Sivaji Maharaj and another on Prophet Muhammad (Sa). Mahathma Phule composed the second poem with the title ‘Manav Muhammad’. His adopted son Yaswant Jyotirao Phule got it published by Subodh Prakashan Press and released it in 1891. Then the book was priced at 12 ‘annas’. Later, the poem of appreciation (Pawada) was included in ‘MAHATHMA PHULE SAMAGRA VANGMAY’ published by the Department of Literature and culture, Maharashtra Government under the editorship of Prof. Hari Narke (University of Pune, Maharashtra) at page Nos.608, 609.

The pawada ‘Manav Muhammad’ written by Mahathma Jyotirao Phule is very lengthy. In this pawada he wrote about Islam, Prophet Muhammad (Sa), Muslims and was highly critical about the social conditions of those days, the distress of Athishudra and Shudra castes and the oppressive acts of the dominant castes. Renowned Urdu poet

Professor Doctor Ibrahim Fiaz of Solapur, Maharashtra translated into Urdu and Hindi that part of the pawada which deals with Islam, Prophet Muhammad (Sa) and Muslims leaving out the critical parts. The Urdu translation found place in the book ‘Nukhushe Javida’. Mr. Anjum Zakaria Inamdar (Pune, Maharashtra) sang that Urdu translation of the pawada in his mellifluous voice and posted the video on You tube. The pawada sung by him can be heard through the web link <https://youtu.be/BZClXhTs8c>

In that way the pawada was translated into several languages. Renowned writer and Polyglot Abul Foujan (Karimnagar, Telengana) translated that pawada into Telugu in 2017. Abul Foujan and I discussed and reviewed the translation and gave a final shape to it in 2020. I included that Telugu translation of the pawada along with its Urdu and Hindi translations in this appendix.

Mahathma Jyotirao Phule moved among Muslims right from his childhood and mingled with them. When his father Govindarao joined him in school several Muslim boys became his friends. Later he studied in Scottish Missionary school for some time and after that he studied in the Government School in Budhwar wada area of Poona. There he developed close friendship with some Muslim students along with students belonging to other castes and religions. He used to have discussions with them on the comparative merits and demerits of Islam and Hindu religions. (Jotirao Phule, Tarkateertha Lakxmanshastri Joshi, National Book Trust, India, New Delhi, 1992, page No. 7)

There were Muslim residences in Ganzpet around the house of Govindarao Phule, father of Mahathma Jotirao Phule. He was able to enter their houses freely along with his Muslim friends. He used to take water from their pots on his own without any hesitation and drink it. He was able to enter any Muslim house. Nobody ever raised any objection to him. (Mahathma Jyothiba Phule (Hayat and Karname), Syed Shah Ghajiuddin, Idara Barae Mutalea Wa Tahqiq Tarkhe, Deccan, Solapur, 2010, page No, 34)

Mr. BVK Purnandam's **English Translation** of Mr Abul Fouzan's Telugu Version of the PAWADA written originally in Marathi by Mahathma Jotirao Phule.
Mr BVK Purnanadam is a retired English lecturer of Guntur, Andhrapradesh.

MANAV MUHAMMAD

Muhammad (sa) came into the world –
And turned darkness into light
He strengthened our relation with God –
Caused aversion against idolatry
He said that God is truth and asked us to worship only Him –
Told us to keep away from untruth
He told us not to think of imaginary idols –
Told us to turn our thoughts towards kindness and goodness
Muhammad (sa) went ahead with justice and faith –
And the Quran that gives the message of fraternity
He stressed that there is only one God –
Said that He is the basis for all creation
The earth and the sky, the Sun, the Moon and the stars move as
per his commands, he said
We are all created by that creator –
He is the Lord to all and master of all
None but Him is worshipable –
None but Him is eligible for worship
I came to you with that message –
And with the gifts of prosperity and success for you
Muhammad (sa) is the embodiment of reality –
Muhammad (sa) is the incontrovertible evidence for truth
Muhammad (sa) said that Allah is great –
Took Islam into every household
Muhammad (sa) led a very simple life –
I would lay down my life for him
Muhammad (sa)'s heart was full of divine thought –
His heart was filled to the brim with divine beauty
Muhammad (sa) erased the differences of 'you' and 'me' –

He took all people to his bosom
He liberated us from ignorance and decadence –
Muhammad (sa) made man humane
Muhammad (sa)'s humanity is great –
This slogan reverberated in all directions
There is only one creator and all creation is his –
All the people of the world are brothers and sisters
Residents of Mecca did not heed to his word –
They attacked him indiscriminately
When the animosities became intensive –
Muhammad (sa) migrated as per Allah's command
Muhammad (sa) got freed from the evil deeds of enemies –
Made Madeena his place of residence.
Message of truth blossomed and bore fruit in Madeena –
The light from Madeena spread all over the earth
Mughals came to India as rulers –
They brought here Muhammad (sa)'s message of Monism
Aryans' domination had been here for long –
They considered shudras as worse than beasts
Muslims made shudras as their own people –
They respected shudras and took them to their bosom
Kshathriyas are the embodiment of valour here –
They all mingled with Muslims as friends
How they celebrated Holi and Diwali –
So did they make Muharram their own festival
True religion binds the hearts together –
The one that removes hatred from the hearts is true religion
Under the guise of religion and religious beliefs –
Some people create discord and often cause riots
Their own people are aliens in their view –
Where this attitude leads to is yet to be seen
Hark to what 'Jyoti' says –
It is better to be cautious with people of this kind

Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Faiz's Urdu translation of the PAWADA written originally in Marathi by Mahathma Jotirao Phule.

Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Faiz is a renowned Urdu poet of Solapur, Maharashtra.

محمد ﷺ جو دنیا میں تشریف لائے
خدا سے تعلق کچھ اس طرح جوڑا
کہا جھوٹ سے اپنا دامن بچالو
خیالی بتوں کے خیالوں کو چھوڑو
محمد ﷺ بڑے دین و ایمان لے کر
کہا ایک ہے ایک خالق تمہارا
زمین آسمان چاند سورج تارے
اسی ایک خالق کی مخلوق ہم سب
سوا اس کے معبود کوئی نہیں ہے
اسی کا میں آیا ہوں پیغام لے کر
محمد ﷺ حقیقت کے پیکر محمد ﷺ
محمد ﷺ نے فرمایا اللہ اکبر
محمد ﷺ سدا گامزن سادگی پر
محمد ﷺ کے دل میں خیال خدا تھا
محمد ﷺ نے نقش دوئی کو مٹایا
بہالت سے پستی سے اوپر اٹھایا
محمد ﷺ کی انسانیت رنگ لائی
خدا ایک ہے اس کی ساری خدائی
نہ مانے مگر اہل مکہ نہ مانے
جو بڑھتی تھی دشمنوں کی عداوت
مدینے میں حق کا ہوا بول بالا
مغل ہند میں سکراں بن کے آئے
نجی دشمنوں سے یوں چھچھا چھڑایا
یہاں آریہ با اثر تھے سراسر
مسلمان نے شوروں کو اپنا بنایا
جو کھتری یہاں تھے شجاعت کے پیکر
وہ جس طرح بولی دیوالی مناتے
جو رشتوں کو جوڑے وہی دھرم سچا
جو دھرم اور دھواس کی آڑ لے کر
ہے اپنے بھی ان کی نظر میں پرانے
سنو کھول کر کان جوتی کا کہنا

اجالوں میں بدلے اندھیروں کے سایہ
بتوں کی پرستش سے منہ اپنا موڑا
خدا سچ ہے بس اس کو اپنا بنالو
بھلائی کی جانب ارادوں کو موڑا
پیغام اخوت و قرآن لے کر
اسی کی بدولت یہ عالم ہے سارا
اسی کے اشارے پہ چلتے ہیں سارے
وہی سب کامالک وہی سب کا ہے رب
سوا اس کے معبود کوئی نہیں ہے
تمہاری بھلائی کا انعام لے کر
محمد ﷺ صداقت کے پیکر محمد ﷺ
محمد ﷺ پیغمبر اسلام گھر گھر
تصدق ہے جاں آپ ﷺ کی زندگی پر
محمد ﷺ کے دل میں جمال خدا تھا
محمد ﷺ نے سب کو گلے سے لگایا
محمد ﷺ نے انسان کو انسان بنایا
تو ہر سمت سے پھر یہ آواز آئی
کہ دنیا کے انسان ہیں بھائی بھائی
محمد ﷺ پر کھل کر لگے علم ڈھانے
بحکم خدا کی محمد ﷺ نے ہجرت
مدینے سے دنیا میں پھیلایا
محمد ﷺ کا پیغام وحدت بھی لائے
محمد ﷺ نے چل کر مدینہ بسایا
سمجھتے تھے شوروں کو حیوان سے پتر
انہیں دے کر عرت گلے سے لگایا
رہے اہل ایمان کے وہ دوست بن کر
اسی طرح سے تعزیے بھی بنجاتے
جو نفرت کو چھوڑے وہی دھرم اچھا
لڑاتے ہیں لوگوں کو آپس میں اکٹھا
یہ ان کی ادا جانے سیا رنگ لائی
کہ بہتر ہے ایہوں سے ہشیار رہنا

Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Faiz's **Hindi translation** of the PAWADA written originally in Marathi by Mahathma Jotirao Phule.

Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Faiz is a renowned Urdu poet of Solapur, Maharashtra.

मोहम्मद जो दुनिया मे तशरीफ लाये	उजालों मे बदले अंधरों के साथे
खुदासे त-अलुक कुछ इस तरह जोडा	बुतों कि परस्तिश से मुँह अपना मोडा
कहा झुठ से अपना दामन बचालो	खुदा सच है बस इसको अपना बना लो
खयाली बुतों को खयालो को छोडो	भलाई कि जानिब इरादों को मोडो
मोहम्मद बडे दिनो ईमान लेकर	पयाम अखुत व कुरआन ले कर
कहा एक है एक खालिक तुम्हारा	उसी की बदौलत है ये आलम सारा
जमीन आस्मान चाँद सूरज सितारे	उसीके इशारों पे चलते है सारे
उसी एक खालीक की मखलूक हम सब	वही सबका मालिक वही सब का है रब
सिवाए उसके माबूद कोई नहीं है	सिवाए उसके मस्जुद कोई नहीं है
उसीका मै आया हूँ पैगाम लेकर	तुम्हारी भलाई का इनाम लेकर
मोहम्मद हकीकत के पै कर मोहम्मद	मोहम्मद सदाकत के पै कर मोहम्मद
मोहम्मद ने फरमाया अल्लाहू अकबर	मोहम्मद ने पहुंचाया ईस्लाम घर घर
मोहम्मद सदा गामजन सादगी पर	तसहुक है जान आपकी जिंदगी पर
मोहम्मद के दिल में खयाले खुदा था	मोहम्मद के दिल मे जमाले खुदा था
मोहम्मद ने नक्शे दवाई को मिटाया	मोहम्मद ने सबको गले से लगाया
जहालत से पस्ती से उपर उठाया	मोहम्मद ने इंसा को इंसा बनाया
मोहम्मद की ईसानियत रंग लायी	तो हर सिम्त से फिर यह आवाज आयी
खुदा एक है उसकी सारी खुदाई	के दुनिया ईसान है भाई भाई
न माने मगर अहले मक्का न माने	मोहम्मद पे खुलकर लगे जुल्म ढाने
जो बढती गयी दुश्मनों की अदावत	बहुक्म खुदा कि मोहम्मद ने की हिजरत
मदिने मे हक का हुआ बोलबाला	मदिने से दुनियाँ मे फैला ऊजाला
मुगल हिंद मे हुकमरा बनके आये	मोहम्मद का पैगाम वहिदत भी लाये
निजी दुश्मनों से यु पिछा छुड़ाया	मोहम्मद ने चलकर मदिना बसाया
यहाँ आर्या बा असर थे सरासर	समजते थे शुद्र को हैवान से बदतर
मुसलमानों ने शुद्रों को अपना बनाया	उन्हें देकर इज्जत गले से लगाया
जो खत्री यहाँ सुजाअत के पैकर	रहे अहलो ईमान के वो दोस्त बनकर
वो जिस तरह होली दिवाली मनाते	उसी तरहसे वो ताजिये भी बिठाते
दिलो को जो जोडे वही धर्म सच्चा	जो नफरत को छोडे वही धर्म सच्चा
जो धर्म और विश्वास की आड लेकर	लडाते है लोगों को आपस में अक्सर
है अपने भी इनकी नजर में पराये	ये इनकी अदा जाने क्या रंग लाये
सुनो खोलकर कान ज्योती का कहना	के बेहतर ऐसो से होशियार रहना

Mr Abul Fouzan's **Telugu translation** of Urdu version of the PAWADA written originally in Marathi by of Mahathma Jotirao Phule
Mr Abul Fouzan is renowned writer and translator, Karimnagar, Telangana State..

ముహమ్మద్(స) ప్రపంచానికి విచ్చేసినారు - చీకట్లను వెలుగుల్లోకి మార్చేసినారు.

పరమాత్మతో సంబంధాన్ని దృఢపర్చినారు - విగ్రహారాధన పట్ల విముఖత కలిగించినారు.

పరమాత్మ సత్యం, ఆయన్నే ఆరాధించమన్నారు - అసత్యం నుండి దూరంగా ఉండమన్నారు.

ఊహజనిత విగ్రహాల ఊసే వద్దన్నారు - మేలు మంచితనాల దిశగా ఊహలు మళ్ళించమన్నారు.

ముహమ్మద్ (స) ధర్మ-విశ్వాసాలతో ముందుకు సాగారు - సౌభ్రాతృత్వ సందేశమిచ్చే ఖురాన్‌తో కదిలారు.

సృష్టికర్త మీకొక్కడే అని నొక్కి వక్కాణించారు - సృష్టికంతటికీ ఆయనే ఆధారభూతమన్నారు.

భూమ్యాకాశాలు, సూర్యచంద్ర సక్షత్రాలు - ఆయన అజ్ఞానుసారమే చరిస్తున్నాయన్నారు.

ఆ సృష్టికర్త సృష్టితాలమే మనమంతా-ఆయనే సర్వులకు ప్రభువు, అందరికీ యజమాని అన్నారు.

ఆయనొక్కడే తప్ప మరెవ్వరూ ఆరాధ్యులు కారు - ఆయన తప్ప ఇంకెవరూ ఆరాధనకు అర్హులు కారు.

ఆ సందేశమే తీసుకుని మీ వద్దకు వచ్చాను - మీకోసం శ్రేయో సాఫల్యాల కానుక తెచ్చాను.

ముహమ్మద్ (స) వాస్తవికతకు నిలువెత్తు రూపం - ముహమ్మద్ (స) యదార్థానికి తిరుగులేని సాక్ష్యం.

అల్లాహ్ మహోన్నతజని ముహమ్మద్ (స) పలికారు - ఇంటింటా ఇస్లాంను ముహమ్మద్ (స) చేరవేశారు.

ముహమ్మద్ (స) గడిపారు అతి సామాన్య జీవితం - ఆ మహనీయుని కోసం అర్పించును గాక నా ప్రాణం.

ముహమ్మద్ (స) గుండెనిండా దైవభావనే ఉండేది-ముహమ్మద్ (స) మనుసన్నునిండా దైవ సౌందర్యమే ఉండేది.

స్వపరాలభేదాల్ని ముహమ్మద్(స) రూపుమాపారు-సర్వజనులను హృదయానికి ముహమ్మద్(స) హత్తుకున్నారు.

అజ్ఞానం, అధోపతనాల నుండి విముక్తం చేశారు - మనిషిని మనీషిగా మార్చారు ముహమ్మద్ (స)

ముహమ్మద్ (స) మానవత్వం మహిమను చూపింది - నలుదిక్కులా ఈ నినాదం పిక్కటిల్లింది.

సృష్టికర్త ఒక్కడే, సృష్టి అంతా ఆయనదే - విశ్వజనులంతా ఒకరికొకరు సహోదరులే.

వినలేదు మక్కావాసులు ఆయన మాట వినలేదు-విచ్చలవిడిగా ముహమ్మద్(స) పై దౌర్జన్యాలు సాగించారు.

శత్రువుల శత్రుత్వం తీవ్రతరమైనప్పుడు - అల్లాహ్ ఆదేశం మీద వలస వెళ్ళారు ముహమ్మద్(స).

శత్రువుల దుష్టుత్వాల నుండి ముహమ్మద్(స) విముక్తమయ్యారు- మదీనాను ముహమ్మద్ (స) ఆవాసం చేసుకున్నారు.

మదీనాలో సత్యసందేశం వికసించింది, ఫలించింది - మదీనా నుండి వెలుగు భువి అంతా వ్యాపించింది.

భారతావనికి మొగలులు పాలకులుగా వచ్చారు - ముహమ్మద్(స) ఏకేశ్వర సందేశాన్ని తీసుకొచ్చారు.

ఆర్యులిక్కడ ఎంతోకాలంగా ఆధిపత్యంలో ఉన్నారు-శూద్రులు పశువుల కన్నా హీనమని వారు భావించారు.

శూద్రుల్ని ముస్లింలు తమవారుగా చేసుకున్నారు - గౌరవించి శూద్రుల్ని తమ గుండెలకు హత్తుకున్నారు.

శౌర్యానికి క్షత్రియులు ఇక్కడ ప్రతిరూపాలు - ముస్లింలకు వారంతా మిత్రులే మెలిగారు.

హోళి, దీవాళిల్ని వారెలా జరుపుకున్నారో - పీర్ల పండగని కూడా తమదిగా చేసుకున్నారు.

మనుస్సులను కలిపేది నిజమైన ధర్మం - ద్వేషాలను మాపేదే సత్యమైన ధర్మం.

మతం,మత విశ్వాసాలను అడ్డు పెట్టుకుని - ప్రజలలో కలహాలు సృష్టించి తరచూ ఘర్షణలకు గురిచేస్తారు.

స్వజనులు కూడా వారి దృష్టిలో పరాయివారే - ఏ ఫలితాన్నిస్తుందో వారి ఈ వెఖిరి చూడాల్సిందే.

చెవులు రిక్కురించి 'జోతి' చెప్పేది వినందోయ్ - ఇలాంటి వారితో జాగ్రత్తగా ఉండటమే మేలందోయ్.

After the completion of his school education, Mahathma Phule wanted to wage a war, together with his friends, for the freedom of the motherland. He started making efforts in that direction too. During those days he attended the wedding of a friend and took part in the wedding procession. People belonging to dominant castes were enraged at his presence in the procession and upbraided him in foul language and made him leave the procession. When he narrated this bitter experience to his father Govindarao, he tried to convince him that all that was natural and that people of lower castes should abide by the restrictions, objections and sanctions imposed by higher castes. After experiencing such abominable conditions prevailing in society, he thought that fighting for freedom from social slavery was more important than fighting for freedom from political slavery. When he realized that it was only through education that freedom from social slavery is possible, he started his journey in the direction of social movements.

When Jyotirao Phule and Savithribai Phule decided upon their journey in the direction of social movements, three Muslims – Munshi Gafar Baig, Osman Shaik and Fatima Shaik – played a crucial role in the initial stages of their personal lives and in their movement. When young boy Jyotirao's schooling was discontinued by his father, it was Munshi Gafar Baig who helped him rejoin the school. When Jyotirao's father Govindarao was angry at his son's starting a school for the girls of Athishudra and Shudra castes and drove Phule couple out of his house, it was Osman Shaik who came to their rescue and provided shelter for the couple. When Phule couple started making efforts for the universalization of education and for educating girls, it was Fatima Shaik who appreciated their endeavour and came forward to help them. These incidents and the social environment he grew up helped him develop a positive attitude towards Muslims, Islam and Prophet Muhammad (Sa).

It was under the influence of that positive attitude that he wrote a pawada titled 'Manav Muhammad'. In that pawada he lauded Islam,

Prophet Muhammad (Sa) and Muslims and in his books he praised them profusely. In a fictional argument between a Brahmin and a Shudra in ‘Satsar-1’, Jyotirao Phule makes the Shudra say, ‘Is our duty only to serve you? When we want we will adopt Christian or Mohammadan religion for our convenience’ and issue a warning. (Mahatma Jyothiba Phule (Hayat Aur Karname), Syed Shah Ghaziuddin, Idara Barae Mutalea Wa Tahqiq Tarkhe Deccan, Solapur, 2010, Page No.79). In ‘Sarvajanik Sathya Dharm’ he says, ‘...freed the enslaved Shudra classes...ate in the same plate, had marital relationships and gave all rights.’ (Mahatma Jyothiba Phule(Hayat Aur Karname), Syed Shah Ghaziuddin, Page No.79) In his books such as ‘Kashkar.Ka.Tajia’, ‘Sarvajanik Sathya Dharm Pusthak’, and ‘Gulami’ he not only praises but expresses agreement on several social practices while discussing religious and social practices of Muslims.

Mahatma Jyotirao Phule did not stop with praising Islam, Prophet Muhammad(Sa) and Muslims. He debunked the wrong ways of Muslim rulers, Muslim populace and religious leaders of Islam. He welcomed and praised positive aspects of Islam and Muslims and in the same breath he exposed their defects and historical wrongs and remarked that they had forgotten the messages of Islam such as social equality and being partial to the suffering people. (Mahatma Jyothiba Phule(Hayat Aur Karname), Syed Shah Ghaziuddin, Page No.80)

He assailed the Muslim rulers in India that they indulged in luxuries forgetting the tenets of Islam such as social equality and fighting for the suffering people. In ‘Sarvajanik Sathya Dharm Pusthak’, he says, ‘Muslims have forgotten their aim. They are immersed in dances and songs. They are intoxicated in luxuries and comforts. This angered the creator... and ended their power and arrogance. He made the English sit in place of Muslims (rulers).’ (Mahatma Jyothiba Phule (Hayat Aur Karname), Syed Shah Ghaziuddin, Page No.81) Thus Phule expressed his anger at the ways of the Muslim rulers of the day. Criticisms apart, the pawada ‘Manav Muhammad’ in which Phule heaped praises on Islam, Prophet Muhammad(Sa) and Muslims remains significant in the history of his literature. ♦

ఆధార గ్రంథాలు



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Mr. Naseer gave up government job to practice law. There upon working as a reporter for UDAYAM, a Telugu daily, he rose, in a span of ten years, to the level of News Coordinator in its Vijayawada edition. Later on he worked for a period of Six years as Newa and Legal coordinator for Siti Cable Network Private Limited (Vijayawada), looking after its News Net work and Legal matters. After that he joined in VAARATHA, a Telugu daily, as a News Bureau Incharge of its Guntur edition. He took voluntary retirement from the job in 2004 and dedicated himself completely to Travel-Research-Writing-Publication and Campaign activities.

Though he started writing since his school days his poems were first published in 1975 in MARO PRAPANCHAM, a hand written monthly. Later several of his short stories, cartoons were published in 1976 in several Telugu monthly magazines such as Pragathi, Jayasree and Jyothi. Since then many of his poems, songs, short stories and hundreds of political, social, literary, historical essays, reviews and cartoons have been published. He worked with his friend VSR Avadhani in running a hand written monthly magazine MARO PRAPANCHAM and BHERI. He extended his service as honorary and associate editor to various periodicals published by several social organisations. He edited and published INDIA a monthly from 2006 to 2011.

He started writing books from 1998 on THE ROLE OF MUSLIMS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE FREEDOM OF INDIA in Telugu language and has 14 books to his credit. They are 1. Indian Freedom Movement: Muslims 2. Indian Freedom Movement: Muslim Women, 3. Indian Freedom Movement: Muslim People's Struggles, 4. Indian Freedom Movement: Andhra Pradesh Muslims, 5. Indian Freedom Struggle: Muslim He roes, 6.

Chirasmaraneeyulu (100 life sketches of Muslim Freedom Fighters in brief), 7. 1857: Muslims, 8. Mysore Tiger Teepu Sultan, 9. Shaheed-e-Azam Ashfhaqulla Khan, 10. Aksharasilpulu (Directory of 333 Muslim Writers and Poets who are Writing in Telugu). 11. Charithardhulu (Album of 155 Muslim Freedom Fighters of Indian subcontinent who fought against British colonial rulers from 1757 to 1947), 12. Kuwait Kaburlu, 13. Bismil - Ashfaq, 14. Pandit Ramprasad Bismil – Ashfhaqhullah Khan. 15. Kavi Raju Dr. Umar Ali Sha, 16. Saviour of Gandhiji : Bataq Miya Ansari, 17. Mahatma Gandhi : Muslim Associates and Followers, 18. Azad Hind Fouz : Muslim Warriors, 19. Moulana Abul Kalam Azad. 20. The first Muslim Lady Teacher of Modern India : Fathima Sheik. All his books have been reprinted several times.

Of these books SHAHEED-E-AZAM ASHFHAQHULLAH KHAN has been translated into Urdu. PANDIT RAMPRASAD BISMIL-ASHFHAQULLAH KHAN has been published in Telugu, English and Urdu languages and altogether 20,000 copies of the book have been distributed free of cost in more than 250 towns India wide and in abroad. The album CHARITHARDHUYLU / THE IMMORTALS published in Telugu and English in 2014 and became popular nationally and internationally and it is published in Tamil and going to be published in different languages very shortly. The Book SAVIOUR OF GANDHIJI : BATAQ MIYA ANSARI published in Telugu, English, Hindi and Urdu in total 21,000 copies and distributed throughout India. Another book MAHATMA GANDHI : MUSLIM ASSOCIATES AND FOLLOWERS is published 12,000 copies in Telugu and English and the same is distributed throughout India. MOULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD is published 3000 copies and distributed in Andhrapradesh and Telangana States. The latest Book THE FIRST MUSLIM LADY TEACHER OF MODERN INDIA : FATHIMA SHAIK. published 5000 copies and distributed in AP, Telangana, Maharastra and Karnataka on REQUEST. And it is released in more than 142 Centers in above mentioned four states.

Mr Naseer Ahamed's lengthy essay in English INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE - ROLE OF MUSLIMS found a place in the collection of essays published by Aligarh Muslim University. This essay found its place in the special souvenirs of several organisations and periodicals.

With the sole aim of spreading the information about Indian Muslim Freedom Fighters, to every nook and corner of not only India but also the world, he is organising EXHIBITIONS OF THE PORTRAITS OF MUSLIM

FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF INDIA throughout India on invitation of different organizations and persons. With the cooperation of various organizations and friends NAME STICKERS and CALENDARS with the pictures and details of Indian Muslim Freedom Fighters are being printed in bulk and distributed among the students and public free of cost. BOOKLETS with the information of those freedom fighters who carved a niche for themselves in the freedom struggle have been printed in bulk and distributed throughout India as a gift to readers with the active support of the friends. Visiting card size SPECIAL CARDS, on which pictures of the selected freedom fighters with their brief information are being printed in bulk and distributed among the interested.

Mr. Naseer has been sending PDF files of his books free of cost since last 12 years to all those who request him for the pdf files of his books. So far he has sent by mail, WhatsApp, TelegramApp PDF files of his all books to more than 20,000 interested readers. He got two WEBSITES developed for down loading his works very easily by any one. Naseer has been, developing all the ways so that his books on the role of muslims in the struggle for the freedom of India reach thousands of readers in India and abroad through his websites and BLOGS. Mr. Naseer has been striving hard for the past 22 years to popularise the sacrifices of the courageous sons and daughters of India among people in general and youth and children in particular. Mr. Naseer Ahamed is the only person in India who is writing books and articles and propagating by different kinds of novel methods and exhibitions for the last 22 years on this exclusive subject i.e THE ROLE OF MUSLIMS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR THE FREEDOM OF INDIA.

Mr. Naseer is a multifaceted personality. He is an actor, painter, cartoonist, orator, journalist, lawyer and social activist. He has received 16 awards so far from regional and national organisations. He participated in hundreds of international, national and regional conferences, seminars and symposia on invitation. Writing with a zeal for democratization of knowledge, Mr. Syed Naseer Ahamed aims to contribute his mite as a writer in building a secular, socialist, democratic, egalitarian society.

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